

REMARKS

Claims 1-25 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-13 and 16-25 have been rejected.

Claims 14 and 15 are objected to.

Claims 21-25 have been amended. No new matter has been added by these amendments.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 101

Claims 21-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. The Examiner suggested that amending these claims to recite a computer readable storage medium would overcome this rejection. Since claims 21-25 have been amended as suggested, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of this rejection.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-13 and 16-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being anticipated by “RFC 2866” in view of Applicant’s admitted prior art (AAPA). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

With respect to claim 1, the cited art fails to anticipate, teach, or suggest “creating a unique session identifier for a user, wherein the unique session identifier is created by one of a plurality of network access servers; and the unique session identifier is created in a manner that prevents more than one of the network access servers from creating a same unique session identifier.” In particular, the cited art neither teaches nor suggests a method in which a network access server creates a unique session identifier in the manner described in claim 1.

The Office Action cites sections 1.2, 2, and 5.5 of RFC 2866 as teaching “creating a unique session identifier for a user, wherein the unique session identifier is created by one of a plurality of network access servers.” Office Action, p. 7. The cited sections of RFC 2866 recite, in part:

“Each service provided by the NAS to a dial-in user constitutes a session, with the beginning of the session defined as the point wherein service is first provided and the end of the session defined as the point where service is ended. A user may have multiple sessions in parallel or series if the NAS supports that, with each session generating a separate start and stop accounting record with its own Acct-Session-Id.” (Section 1.2, definition of “session”).

“When a client is configured to use RADIUS Accounting, at the start of service delivery it will generate an Accounting Start packet describing the type of service being delivered and the user it is being delivered to, and will send that to the RADIUS Accounting server, which will send back an acknowledgement that the packet has been received.” (Section 2)

[The Acct-Session-Id] attribute is a unique Accounting ID to make it easy to match start and stop records in a log file. The start and stop records for a given session MUST have the same Acct-Session-Id. An Accounting-Request packet MUST have an Acct-Session-Id.” (Section 5.5).

These above-quoted sections of RFC 2866 describe that a NAS can provide services to dial-in users in the form of sessions, and that each Accounting-Request packet must have an Acct-Session-Id. The Office Action appears to be equating the Acct-Session-Id with the unique session identifier recited in claim 1. In contrast to amended claim 1, however, the cited sections of RFC 2866 neither teach nor suggest that the Acct-Session-Id is created in such a way that no more than one of a plurality of network access servers can create the same Acct-Session-Id. Instead, the cited sections of RFC 2866 simply state that, for a given NAS, each session will have its own Acct-Session-Id.

The Office Action relies upon the alleged AAPA to teach the features of the claims that are not taught by RFC 2866. Office Action, p. 8. In particular, the Office Action relies upon the portion of AAPA that states:

Accordingly, it is possible for the AAA server 30a to receive n session id values, where each of the n session id values corresponds to a different NAS 28 but is the same number. The AAA server 30a can easily handle this condition because the AAA server 30a associates each session id value with the corresponding NAS 28 based upon a unique NAS address for each NAS. Because each of these duplicative session id's is coming from a different NAS address, the AAA Server 30a can distinguish between the NAS's 28a-28n when managing the sessions involved. Specification, p. 10.

Based upon the cited portion of AAPA, the Office Action states that it would have been obvious:

to modify the teachings of these combined references wherein a unique session identifier is created in a manner that prevents more than one of the network access servers from creating a same unique session identifier since, in view of the combined teachings of these references, the AAA server is able to distinguish network access servers by use of a unique identifier and, in the event that a duplicate session identifier is used by the same network access server, the AAA server would still be able to distinguish between the network access servers and their respective sessions. Therefore, these teachings and suggestions would have suggested to one of ordinary skill in the art that if the AAA server can both distinguish between the sessions of one network access server and also the sessions of a plurality of network access servers and their respective sessions, the AAA server would also be able to distinguish between sessions that contain a session identifier that would be unique to both the network access servers and their sessions and to create a unique session identifier that prevents more than one network access server from creating a same unique session identifier for the purpose of distinguishing between sessions and also a plurality of network access servers would have involved only routine skill in the art. Office Action, pp. 9-10.

Applicants disagree with several of the above assertions. Initially, Applicants note that if the AAA server is already able to distinguish between non-unique session identifiers, as described in AAPA, which would result from the operation of a network access server configured as described in RFC 2866, there does not appear to be any motivation for one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the operation of the network access server such that the network access server would generate unique session identifiers.

Furthermore, the assertion that the AAA server will be able to distinguish between unique session identifiers (as recited in the claims) because the AAA server can distinguish between non-unique session identifiers (as described in AAPA) fails to provide any relevant teaching or suggestion about the features of claim 1, which concern activities performed by a network access server, not activities performed by a AAA server. The mere allegation that the AAA server could distinguish between unique session identifiers like those described in claim 1 provides no teaching or suggestion to modify a network access server in a manner that would cause the network access server to generate such unique session identifiers.

Applicants additionally note that neither of the cited references suggests that a network access server generate a unique session identifier. Instead, RFC 2866 describes how a network access server can generate a non-unique identifier, and AAPA describes

how an AAA server can differentiate between non-unique identifiers based upon the address of the network access server that generated a given non-unique identifier. Thus, neither reference suggests that a network access server (as opposed to, for example, an AAA server) generate a session identifier that is unique.

Furthermore, neither reference teaches or suggests the use of session identifiers that are “created in a manner that prevents more than one of the network access servers from creating a same unique session identifier.” In particular, AAPA explicitly describes the opposite scenario, in which multiple network access servers can create the same session identifier. Techniques for differentiating among identical session identifiers received by an AAA server, as described in AAPA, are clearly not the same as techniques for generating unique session identifiers among several network access servers. Furthermore, explicitly describing a scenario in which several network access servers actually generate the same session identifier clearly neither teaches nor suggests preventing more than one of a plurality of network access servers from creating the same session identifiers. Thus, the cited art clearly neither teaches nor suggests the use of unique session identifiers described in claim 1.

It is further noted that the cited art would not be expected to teach or suggest a system in which a unique session identifier is created in such a way that no more than one of a plurality of network access servers can create the same session identifier. As noted in the background sections of Applicants’ specification, existing systems (e.g., as illustrated in FIGs. 1A and 1B of Applicants’ specification) operated in situations in which it is “possible for the AAA server 30a to receive n session id values, where each of the n session id values corresponds to a different NAS 28 but is the same number [emphasis added]. The AAA server 30a can easily handle this condition because the AAA server 30a associates each session id value with the corresponding NAS 28 based upon a unique NAS address for each NAS. Because each of these duplicative session id’s is coming from a different NAS address, the AAA Server 30a can distinguish between the NAS’s 28a-28n when managing the sessions involved.” Specification, p. 10. Thus, existing techniques were available to handle the situation in which multiple network access servers communicated the same session identifier to the same AAA server. None of the cited art expresses any need for the feature recited in claim 1, in

which the unique session identifier is created in a manner that prevents more than one of the network access servers from creating a same unique session identifier.

In the Response to Arguments section of the Office Action, the Examiner seems to imply that because claim 1 does not state how the session identifiers are unique "in any respect" or how the AAA module uses the session identifiers, the session identifiers do not have to actually be unique. Office Action, p. 3. Applicants respectfully disagree and note that claim 1 clearly states that the session identifiers are unique in the respect that "the unique session identifier is created in a manner that prevents more than one of the network access servers from creating a same unique session identifier." In other words, the claim requires that no two of the network access servers can create the same session identifier. Applicants again note that none of the cited art has taught or suggested such a scenario (as noted above, AAPA explicitly described the scenario in which multiple network access servers generate the same session identifier). Thus, this feature of claim 1 is quite clearly not taught or suggested by any of the cited art.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 1 is patentable over the cited art, as are dependent claims 3-4. Claims 6-12, 16, 18-19, 21, and 23-24 are patentable over the cited art for similar reasons.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 14 and 15 have been identified as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants respectfully assert that these claims are currently patentable by virtue of their dependence upon allowable base claims. However, Applicants will rewrite these claims in independent form at a later date if necessary.

CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the application and the claims therein are believed to be in condition for allowance without any further examination and a notice to that effect is solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at 512-439-5087.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on February 26, 2007.

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